

# Remarks at the Opening of the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Summit

Remarks

John Kerry

Secretary of State

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[...]

I want to emphasize something that, to me, is very important as I get to open the GES, and that is that there is a really close connection between what you do as entrepreneurs and investors and what I do as Secretary of State and what the President of the United States does in terms of our foreign initiatives and efforts.

In our world today, there is an intimate connection between the creation of economic opportunity and the potential of political stability or peace – between prosperity and peace – between economic policy and foreign policy, which I have long argued are two sides of the same coin. Economic policy is foreign policy and foreign policy is economic policy, particularly in the globalized world we're living in today.

[...]

The fact is that we need you to utilize your business savvy, your ambition, your dream, your desire to creatively figure out how we can educate a fast-growing generation of kids, how we can improve modes of transportation, how we can deliver health care to everybody and more effectively and efficiently, how we produce medical services that are within the reach of everybody, how we can build the infrastructure needed to grow economies and create shared prosperity worldwide.

We need you to establish your businesses with two frames in mind: to create new products, yes, and do well, yes, turn a profit, help your local community certainly, but also to tackle the enormous global challenges that we face. And in the end – of all the problems that we face, I just want to narrow this down for you to think about it in the context of your meetings in the next days and of what you decide to do when you go out of here and take what you've learned or pursue your dream. I want you to think about these interconnected challenges.

The first is violent extremism and the emergence of radical non-state actors who have no agenda outside of the frustrations that they exploit, the bigotry that they espouse, and the conflicts that they inflame. And the depth of this challenge is now felt in every single corner of the world, and

it was underlined just two weeks ago by the terrorist and homophobic shootings in Orlando, Florida.

[...]

Our second challenging, literally growing in urgency every single day, is to preserve the health of our planet in the face of climate change and other environmental dangers. Last week, I traveled to the Arctic and I saw firsthand the impact of what this means in real terms. Now, I have read about this for years and I've been active in trying to deal with climate change since I went to the Senate in 1985. But I can tell you that seeing it up close and personal gives you a dramatic sense of what is happening in ways that no book or no briefing paper ever does.

[...]

Now, our third generational challenge is tied to the first two. It is to improve overall governance capacity all over the world so that leaders everywhere fight corruption, so they earn public confidence and inspire unity and a sense of vision. Anyone in local or international business confronts this issue every day in a variety of ways; and for entrepreneurs, poor governance can mean the difference between being able to start up and survive or never getting started at all.

[...]

So these are our shared challenges, my friends, as you gather here for two days of total input and stimulation and listen to our common calls to action. These are the areas where we can and must be partners. And it is for these reasons among many more that the Obama Administration has made supporting you, supporting entrepreneurs, a top priority in our diplomacy and foreign policy.

[...]

All of this isn't because of any one country or because of what governments do alone. It's what happens when people have faith in their own values, in their own skills; when they respect the rights and the dignity of each other; and when they believe in the possibility of progress no matter how many setbacks stand in the way.

That is not a complicated formula; in fact, it sounds like a pretty good definition of the spirit entrepreneurs bring to the table each and every day.

[...]

You understand to the depths of your soul what the great Muhammad Ali meant when he said that: "Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power that they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact." (Applause.) "Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare."

GES is about daring. It's about knowing your power to change the world – and then acting on it. It's about leading our planet towards a future of prosperity, peace, and progress. And I look forward to joining with you and all of you as we realize that vision in the years ahead.